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SUBJECT: INDONESIA - DECEMBER 17 AVIAN INFLUENZA UPDATE

1.(SBU) Summary. During a December 16-17 strategy meeting on controlling avian influenza in western Java, Ministry of Agriculture authorities released statistics showing that while Indonesian municipalities affected with poultry AI outbreaks increased in 2008, the number of birds stricken with the disease decreased by 90%. On December 10, the Mayor of Tangerang ordered municipal officials to leave a Tangerang Secretariat baseline health survey meeting when the Mayor learned that Banten provincial officials had distributed Tangerang avian influenza central funds to other parts of the Banten province. On December 10-13, Dr. Sangkot Marzuki convened the Wallacea Conference in Makassar, as a vehicle to relaunch Indonesia's National Academy of Scientists. End Summary.

Ministry of Agriculture Announces AI Case Decrease

12. (U) During a press conference on the sides of a two-day AI strategy session focusing on western Java, Ministry of Agriculture Director General of Animal Health Tjeppy Soedjana announced that while number of affected regions has increased, the number of animals stricken with avian influenza has significantly decreased. According to Ministry of Agriculture statistics, the number of municipalities with confirmed bird flu cases has increased from 60 in 2003, to 294 in 2008, while infections among birds has decreased from 483,364 in 2007 to 46,014 in 2008. According to Tjeppy, between 2009 and 2011, the government plans to focus on the following areas: Jakarta, West Java, East Java, Central Java, Yogyakarta, South Sulawesi, and Lampung. The government will try to better manage traditional markets and poultry collection centers to stop the disease from spreading and will also take steps to control the poultry slaughterhouses and the transportation of the poultry. Several Indonesian newspapers carried the story on December 17.

3.(U) Excerpts from the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) issued during the conference include "... the Ministry of Agriculture working in close cooperation with local governments, has made significant gains in improving HPAI surveillance, prevention, and control capacity throughout the country with control achieved in a number of areas. Ministry of Agriculture data indicates that HPAI does not appear to be spreading to new areas, and overall geographic range appears to be decreasing along with a general decrease in disease incidence, although some areas are still heavily affected. This indicates, that 1) HPAI can be controlled in Indonesia, 2) the Government of Indonesia is capable of controlling this disease, and 3) that more work is required to bring the disease under full

control, particularly on Java."

4.(U) According to technical experts, the increase in reporting of the number of AI affected villages since 2003 is likely attributed to two things 1) uncontrolled spread of the virus from 2003 to early 2005 due to lack of a systematic control program and, 2) increased surveillance of village poultry by USAID funded teams. Recent data indicates that the geographic spread has decreased with no outbreaks reported in Kalimantan in 2008 and significant decreases in outbreaks in Bali and East Java. Experts believe that the geographic range and number of poultry outbreaks is a better indicator of the status of avian influenza in Indonesia rather than the number of diseased birds. According to informal industry sources, the poultry industry continues to have significant problems with the disease, with outbreaks not captured by the current government surveillance system.

Tangerang Project Meeting Disrupted by Politics

5.(SBU) On 10 December, the Tangerang AI trilateral project Secretariat held a workshop to disseminate the findings of health baseline study of poultry production and distribution sites in Tangerang. Municipal workers who collected the data for the project were invited to attend the workshop. However, shortly after arrival, the Tangerang Mayor's office ordered that these employees leave the meeting and return to work due to the Mayor's displeasure with funding. The Government of Indonesia planned to provide Tangerang District and Municipality with 45 billion rupiah (\$4.1 million) for Avian Influenza activities. However, central authorities transferred funds to the Governor of Banten's office who then distributed the

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funds to the other districts and municipalities in the Banten province. Officials cite that the governor believes Tangerang municipality should rely on funds from foreign donors. The Government of Singapore, the U.S. and the Tangerang Trilateral Secretariat do not provide funds to support the municipality.

Academy of Science's Wallacea Conference A Success

16. (U) The Indonesian Academy of Sciences, led by Dr. Sangkot Marzuki, convened its first conference entitled, "Letter from Ternate" in Makassar from 10-13 December. Over 230 Indonesian and foreign scientists and other professionals attended. The conference focused on the importance of Indonesia to the development of the theory of evolution and provided a venue for discussion of future international scientific partnerships. The Academy, dormant for some time, also used the conference to reintroduce and promote itself. Academy members will issue a declaration drafted in the meeting on the topic of preserving Indonesia's biodiversity.

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